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Bush Defends Secrets In CIA

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Former CIA Director George Bush Thursday defended the intelligence agency's policy of secret actions, saying that "you cannot run covert business in the sunshine."

"That is something every president has found," he said, "including President Carter."

Bush, in Charleston to give the keynote address at a student conference on political violence at The Citadel, said he is pleased to hear that Carter is endorsing consolidation of Congressional oversight committees for the CIA. He said last year during his tenure as director, he made 51 appearances before Congressional committees in regard to CIA affairs.

Bush said he favors consolidation, "not to escape but to contain" intelligence information gathered by the CIA.

Bush's remarks on secrecy followed a question directed to him about CIA payments to leaders of foreign countries — Jordan's King Hussein in particular. Bush said published accounts of these payments were "full of untruths and half-truths." He said Carter had looked into the action and "found nothing improper or illegal."

However, when pressed to give more details, Bush refused, saying he was obligated not to discuss sources or methods in connection with CIA affairs.

Bush said one of his major regrets is Americans' "lack of understanding about what the CIA really is." He said 95 per cent of the agency's operations are directed to the collection and dissemination of intelligence.

He said it is particularly frustrating when the CIA is "unable to defend itself" in many cases. Often, he said, "The CIA takes it on the

chin" for that reason.

But Bush is emphatic when he says that the future role of the CIA is "terribly important."

"When I first accepted the position as director, I must admit I was worried. There was talk of dismantling foreign intelligence capabilities," Bush said.

The former director said he is looking forward to an expanded role for the CIA.

"Please don't conjure up images of a James Bond," Bush said, adding that he feels we need the best security agency in the world.

Bush expressed concern that "there are more KGB agents here than ever before...and we're not able to monitor them as closely." Another concern of his is the Russians' move to gain superiority in arms and intelligence.

Bush expressed confidence that Adm. Stansfield Turner, the CIA's new director, will do a fine job. As for Bush, he hasn't yet decided on his future plans.

"I'll be serving on the boards of directors of a couple of companies," he said, "and saving time to keep up my interest in foreign affairs and international politics." He said he will also be lecturing at a few universities.

Bush said he hopes to be in a position to keep abreast of world situations as closely as he was when director of the CIA.

His outlook is rather optimistic. Bush said he feels the world "has a better potential for peace now" despite the turmoil in South America, the Middle East and India and Pakistan. "I think the framework for peace is not bad, provided things can happen," Bush said.



(Staff Photo by D.J. Johnson)

Bush Addresses Students